When a man dies and one of his relatives marries his wives, there is no additional payment of dowry. When a man loses his wife, the dowry is repaid fully, or in part, by the relatives of the deceased wife if she has left no children. If there are children, the widower makes no claim to the dowry.

The widow cuts her hair. After the death of the husband, the wife is made to confess the names of her lovers in order to make them give payments which will finance the celebrations at the end of mourning. She must weep for one whole day and one whole night; she may do nothing without the permission of her husband's heir; and for a month she stays dirty, dressed in an old loincloth. At the end of this time there are celebrations of the end of mourning which last several days. The widow sits for a whole night in the village square, and the husband's relatives throw her water and pimento. The following morning she jumps four times over a fire of dry banana leaves. While she is jumping, men hit her for the anguish which she has caused her husband to endure. After that she receives a new loincloth from her family and then, before beginning the dances, if she has not accepted remarriage to her husband's heir, she chooses a new husband from among the assembled men of the dead man's family.

Neither homosexuality nor bestiality have ever been recorded, to our knowledge, among the Fan.

Prostitution does not exist.

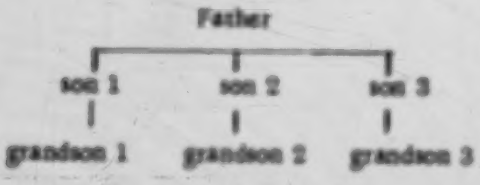
Impotence (eyel), if it is congenital, is attributed to the mother's having accidentally caused milk to flow onto the penis of her son while nursing him. If it occurs later, it is said to be from the abuse of coitus and it is believed that there is no more sperm in the impotent person.

Family Group. The family (nda ebur) consists of the man, his wives, his children, and his brothers. It usually includes several homes and constitutes a village in itself. The authority belongs to the father, and it is he who commands because of his being the most respected. He has absolute power, but also incurs certain duties, the most important of which is to find money or goods as dowry for the women whom his sons wish to marry. These dowries are usually obtained through payments made by the girls' husbands. The most complete mutual aid is obligatory among all members of the family, in all circumstances. When the parents have become too old to continue exercising their authority, they live with the family of their oldest son

where they enjoy great esteem and are consulted every time on decisions concerning all the family, [91] such as the marriage of a child, because this is a matter of alliance with another tribe, or such as moving the village. Young people of a poor family who get themselves adopted may be incorporated into the family and assimilated among its children. The adopted son (ntob) gets a wife from the head of the family which has taken him in. This wife, however, is only loaned to him, and the children whom he may have do not belong to him and are regarded as being of the adopter's family whose name they receive.

Each family has a fetish all its own, which is handed down through the oldest sons. It is often a reed (ayan) which is planted behind the huts of the village where the family lives, by a practitioner in the course of an important ceremony. The practitioner digs a hole, puts into it the bones of a member of the family killed by the bivur, spits onto it some wild pepper that he has chewed, and, before planting the reed, says, "ke nzue, ke wone, me nga non we bemvama e dzam ese dzah bor yĕi, o ke tile e yenege" (without stealing or hiding myself I have taken from my ancestors, so that everything which will be asked of you by this family shall happen). The reed must be treasured and constantly kept clear of weeds which might grow around it. A fowl is sacrificed to this reed by the head of the family every time he wishes to undertake an important matter, and when the village moves the plant is taken along with the bones and replanted.

Social Life. Pahouin society is limited to a group of families which make up the tribe. The latter originates from a single family, the sons of which have left to establish other families in their turn. The separation occurs almost constantly in the third generation. The formation of a tribe may be diagrammed thus:



Grandson 1 establishes a family which keeps the name of the founder; grandson 2, a family which will take the name of this grandson; and

168 the social and cultural organizations are directly blamed: the
166 breaking up and dispersal of the groupings resulting in the rupture
of fundamental interdictions (especially that of exogamy: with the
838 present confusion each man risks marrying his "sister" and being
condemned to a sterile union); the abandonment of traditional
religious observances, especially the Bidri worship rendered to
FH9 ancestors -- so that the Bidri "revenges" itself, "according to cer-
842 tain informants, by making the women sterile. Borrowing from
European civilization and from their neighbors has altered "Fang
manners" and resulted in behavior that is not valid for the Fang
and puts their social existence in danger. These are the principal
reasons brought forth. We have already in this chapter paid par-
ticular attention to these facts, because they show the subjective
aspect of the demographic crisis and how much the search for
fertility and for power, both linked together, still plays a part in
the present reactions of this people, how it takes effect in an
ambiguous manner by having recourse at the same time to modern
foreign methods and to traditional Fang methods. For the Fang
villagers the crisis is the most serious consequence of a situation
created by colonization -- by "civilization," as some of them
curiously say. This is sufficient indication that these facts must
be integrated in the whole we have undertaken to analyze.

[101] III. The Type of Social Structure (1)

1. A study carried out with the help of documents collected especially among the Fang of the Woleu-N'Tem, and principally in Oyem region where Fang vitality is the most authentic.

Tribes, Clans, and Lineages

• 596 The recent clan renewal to which we have often referred has shown the still fundamental importance of the groupings established as a function of "kinship." This was immediately grasped by the first observers and administrators of the Fang country, who insisted on the "family" nature of the Pahouin groupings and came to the

596 conclusion that a substantial social framework did not exist. A report written at the beginning of the century notes the impossibility "of finding an embryo of organization," emphasizing that there exist only more or less extended "families."

596 867 In the past the educational system very early gave the young Fang an exact knowledge of his genealogy (abara). Father Trilles writes that "the young man is particularly taught the individual list of his ancestors, which only concerns the male generations, (for) the woman is ignored," and, moreover, she never receives such instruction. (2) By knowing the relationships within his

2. Father Trilles, Le totémisme chez les Fan [Totemism Among the Fang], notes on pp. 109, 111, 180.

paternal line, the individual knows to which fundamental groupings he belongs, which women are forbidden him, and what relations he should have with such-and-such individuals, both living and dead. By more and more distant links he attaches himself to groupings that are more and more widely extended and are of more and more ancient formation. The first of these [groups] in which he finds himself immediately entered is the nd'ə bot, a patrilocal group at the village level which often has its own locality and communal house, which gather together, under the authority of the "eldest," or mbi-mbt, the latter's posterity, his younger brothers and their posterity, and sometimes that of his paternal uncles; in addition, the [posterity] of individuals who are tied to him by bonds of kinship, adoption, or friendship. The most extended of 649 these [groups] is the "tribe" (ayɔ̀ŋ, formerly ayɔm, studied by Martrou and Trilles, whose origin is neither located nor dated, but simply legendary, and whose dispersal took place throughout nearly the whole of the Fang country. [102] The intermediate groupings spread out concentrically from one to the other; the relations existing between the individuals they contain are expressed by a "fraternity" that is less and less real and less and less binding.

We have kept the term "tribe," used by the first observers of the Fang, to designate this earliest formed grouping, which is

such a case we gather that each principal town of a subdivision is a genuine center of attraction. Although new these towns are not artificial. There is another piece of evidence for this, the social occupational distribution of the urban population is almost constant from one town to another, a proof that it corresponds to needs that are also constant.

Out of 100 inhabitants one generally finds: laborers 16.5, employees 12, traders 8.3, chauffeurs 6.9 (and "motor boys" 4.3), public service employees 6.7, domestic servants 5.8, carpenters 4.9, masons 4, farmers 3.5, tailors 3.2, mechanics 2.9, photographers 0.8, herders 0.5, catechists 0.1, without occupation 9, etc.

This in general outline is the present-day distribution. Let it simply be kept in mind that, with the diffusion of a new culture, the whole society becomes modified. The techniques and tools in use have been increased and diversified at the same time as social conditions.

Chapter 5

Social Organization

1. Forms of Settlement, Habitat

The basic social group is the patriarchal family (nda bot = lit., house of the people), to which corresponds the hamlet or elementary village, the jal (Boulou, pl. mal; Fang, Ewondo, dzal), generally called by the name of the patriarch (esa = father; nnôl = eldest, senior), but sometimes, when isolated, carrying a special toponym (eyôñ = proper name, designation; a person's name is rather jôé; Fang, édzoé). These mal are usually arranged into multifamily, sometimes multiclan, villages, minlam (sing. nlam), the latter term designating both the group of dwellings and the soil appertaining to them. The nlam always has a place name of its own, which may refer to its geographical situation: nkôlayôp = on the hill; to a topographical or botanical peculiarity: ako'abete = dressed stone, ajap = the name of a tree, ma'an = crossroads; or to an incident connected with the founding: ékolewo'o (Ekolowa) = decayed chimpanzee, because the village was

614 are, besides, meyoñ that are outside the system.

614 Among the latter I shall mention the Ndôñ and the Bekôé or Bekwi,
563 to be found under these names in all, or nearly all, the Pahouin tribes.
184 The ethnic substantive Bekôé is simply the plural of a common noun, nkôé, "dwarf." These people are, it seems, descendants of aborigines, undoubtedly Pygmies, "adopted" by the tribes at the time of invasion. Although looked upon as an ayoñ and calling one another brother, they do not practice exogamy and seem to attach their genealogies to those of other clans, to which nevertheless they do not belong.

614 The case of the Ndôñ is quite different. They crossed the Sanaga
184 with the other Pahouin, and they are certainly "active" Pahouin. But they observe endogamy among their three mvôk (Ndôñ Mvu, Ndôñ Bibak, and Ndôñ Bikoé), which no other Pahouin ayoñ does, at least to my knowledge. Besides, I believe I noticed /48/ among those of the southern Cameroons and northern Gabon morphological traits setting them sharply apart from those of neighboring clans—reddish
[142] color of the skin, frequency of green or greenish-blue eyes—which
[144] might be explained by the inbreeding consequent upon endogamy, but also perhaps by a different ethnic origin. Another piece of evi-
[326 dence, as insufficiently attested as the foregoing, is that among the
791] Ndôñ I met the last of the smiths and the most feared magicians among the Boulou and Fang tribes of the Cameroons.

The Ngoé ayoñ also is found under this name in nearly all the Pahouin tribes and, according to Bertaut, among the neighboring Bakoko. The Esel, who are similarly spread throughout the tribes, have non-Pahouin homonyms: /for instance/ the Bantu Esel tribe of the southeastern Cameroons (Moloundou). The name could, however, be a contraction of ésa (ésa-el?). Ngoé and Esel are usually exogamic.

c. The Extended Family or Village Family

● 596 The term "village family" is no doubt more accurate than the
621 classic "extended family," both because the nda bôt (house of the people) is the only social group that corresponds exactly to a geographical form of settlement (the jal or hamlet), and because without the geographical criterion it is difficult to distinguish this /kind of/ family from the intermediate structures between it and the clan, such as segments or lineages (mvôk, bisa). And finally, it is on this

level that the agencies of authority, of social control, are most in evidence.

The head of the family is the senior, ntôl or ntôle mot, of the adult and active men, benya bôtô, "the true men." He is not necessarily the oldest in age, because infirm old men suffer a genuine capitis diminutio /a loss of status/. The founder of the hamlet or his eldest son can still, even if infirm, preserve a certain moral authority as father, ésa, of the family, but actual authority will then be delegated to a nya môtô chosen from his brothers, sons, or nephews, the élo'olo (Bertaut). In principle, a jal is composed of the founder, his old relatives /parents/, his younger brothers, his children and those of his sisters, his unmarried sisters, their illegitimate children and those of his daughters. Wives do not belong to the jal; their village is referred to as jañ. Of a divorced woman one would say, a keya jañ, "she has gone back to her village." The size of the nda bôt depends upon different factors: security, the /family/ head's authority, the fertility of the soil, etc. I have already pointed out how several mal can be gathered into a nlam, a proper village. Nowadays the menda me bôt are tending to decrease numerically and no longer to correspond to the jal, which can from now on combine several /menda me bôt/. The limited or household family is becoming more and more important, while the government-sponsored institution of village chiefship /chefferie/, although it is often only an imperfect substitute for the authority of the ntôl or the ésa, undermines that none the less. The size of an average nda bôt may be calculated at twenty /49/ persons (including the wives who do not belong to the jal), less in the towns and among the less prosperous people, more among large planters and the influential (minkukum).

The nda bôt used to be a religious, military, and economic unit. On the religious plane, the father, ésa, was the custodian of the biéti (Fang, biéri), the portable altar or ark of the ancestral cult containing the skulls of the ancestors; he made the decisions about initiations and bore their expense. The initiations have died out, and the missions have burned dozens, if not hundreds, of biéri. Security and colonial order have removed any interest in the ésa's military function. Only his economic role survives to some extent. He used to be the sole owner of the family goods (biôm), sole treasurer of income, and sole regulator of expenditures, of which the most important was the payment of "bride prices" (minsuba) for his younger brothers and his

sons. When cacao was introduced, cultivation was done collectively by the nda bôt, with the *ésa* selling the produce and taking charge of the money. The younger generation quickly tired of this state of affairs and left their families in order to have plantations of their own. In addition, the inflation of land values from the growing of export crops led to division upon the death of the *ésa* and brought on the splintering of the nda bôt. This had never been very stable, even before the colonial period, but the cessation of military needs made possible a precocious "swarming off," which had not occurred before except when a new nda bôt was large enough to provide for its own defense.

In spite of this disintegration, jal and nda bôt remain the basic units of Pahouin life, more so than the ayoñ. Development of private property notwithstanding, there does exist a juridical community with collective responsibility and obligatory self-help among its members. Many young people denounce this (cf. Eza Boto, Ville cruelle /Cruel City/, no. 182) and partly leave the jal in order to escape. But that is futile because the ties spread throughout the country become closer at a distance /from the jal/ and because the solidarity of the extended family is probably even stronger among emigrants than among stay-at-homes.

d. The Limited or Household Family; Kinship

The limited or household family, composed of an economically independent man, his wife, his children, sometimes old relatives /parents/, unmarried brothers and sisters, is becoming more and more important, both within the nda bôt framework and outside it. The missions have contributed a good deal to this, especially at the outset of evangelical activity, in order to separate the catechumens from their still animistic mintô mi bôt (they incline to react in the opposite direction nowadays to fight against "destructive individualism"). But economic changes have also played an important part. The household family is the unit of the migrant petty official, of the small-scale planter. There is no word for it; people say either mone nda bôt, "little extended family," or simply nda, "house."

Purely for convenience I shall discuss kinship on this level, in terms of an adult married man. /50/